

INTRODUCTION TO PROPHETS

I. DIVISIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Definition: *a prophet was a divine philosopher, instructor, guide, of the people in areas of piety, virtue and devotion. Their lifestyle was simple, plain and consistent, retired and appearing in public only to give a message.*

A. **FORMER-** Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Minor Prophets.

LATTER- Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles.

ISAIAH -first rank in length, dignity, value, importance.

B. **WRITING PROPHETS / SPEAKING PROPHETS** - some prophets spoke but did not write, Elijah, Elisha, John the Baptist, Agabus, Ananias, Jesus. Others wrote, Isaiah to Malachi in the OT and the New Testament Apostles. Moses wrote 475 verses of prophecy, David 385, Isaiah 985, Jeremiah 845, Ezekiel 886.

C. **TERMS FOR PROPHET**

1. naba - to foretell events, pray, make supplication
2. nabi - the prophet, a preacher of righteousness for his day. Forsaw future events in light of righteousness or wickedness of a covenant people. He urged men to live righteous and godly. He warned of events to come predicting things as conditional and stated this as an admonition.
3. seer - 1 Sam. 9:9-11 mentally perceived the purpose of God
4. chuzeh - a beholder, one who has visions and supernatural revelations.
5. charah - a seer, means to glow warm, blaze in anger, zeal, wax hot,

Over 75 prophets and prophetesses are recognized from Adam to Malachi.

D. **TRAINING** - Sons of prophets were pupils or trainees in religion or habits of piety and devotion. They were theological students studying law, poetry, psalms or history of God's people seeking God for direction and wisdom for the people. Schools of prophets were established in Canaan for the training of young men in prophecy. 1Sam 10:5, 10-12, 19:20-24; Elijah headed a school at Gilgal, 4:28, Bethel, 1Kings 12:29, 13:1-32; Jericho 3:17, 15 1 Kings 20:35; Elisha enlarged them 4:1, 38; 5:22; 6:1-7; 9:1.

II. **LAWS FOR INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY**

Some teach that God speaks in mysteries, figures of speech, allusions to manners, customs, symbols and times that cannot be understood before coming to pass. This would defeat the purpose of prophecy since God wants man to know what His will and plans are.

A. **RULES AND APPROACHES**

1. Believe that God does not seek to bewilder or hide truth but meant to be understood by ordinary men.
2. Take the meaning of words literally whether words of history or prophecy, Bible words or ordinary language unless it clearly calls for symbolic interpretation.

3. Do not change meaning of terms from literal to mystical, e.g. earthquake of the 6th seal means the breakup of society in Rev 6:12-17.
4. Do not seek hidden meanings in words, e.g. JerUSAlem = USA.
5. Know that prophecy is a recording beforehand of what is to come.
6. Do not reinterpret Gods interpretation of His symbols, e.g. Daniel 2:38-44; 7:17,23-26; 8:20-23; 9:20-27; Revelation 1:20.
7. Give only one meaning to a passage unless it clearly calls for a double meaning.

a. Law of double reference. A visible creature is addressed but the statement refers to an invisible person or spirit who is using the visible creature as a pawn or tool. Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:11-17; Matthew 16:22-23; Mark 5:7-16; Luke 4:33-35,41. Associate only the statements that applies to the individuals, separate from those which apply to the creature. Genesis 3:15a applies to seed of serpent and satan; 15b applies to satan and to Christ. In Matthew 16:22-23 Peter is addressed as satan, both are spoken to and Peter is rebuked, the primary reference is to the invisible creature. Psalm 16:5-11 pronouns refer to Messiah and David in 5-7; only to Messiah in 8-10, there are 20 references to Messiah in 5-11, Psalm 55:12-14 David betrayed by Ahithophel, friend, counsel (2Sam15:17-23) Jesus betrayed by Judas, personal friend and counsel (John 13:18; Acts 1:20).

b. Law of prophetic perspective. Treats events as if they were continuous and successive when thousands of years may lie between. This may be called Gap Theory. Is 61:1-2 and Luke 4:17; Dan 2:39-45; 7:3-28; 8:3-25, 9:24-27;11:2-45; Rev 1:19; 4:1.

8. Recognize a prophet as a preacher of righteousness, a. who gains understanding of the mind and will of God by vision, dream, revelation, deduction and induction, and special interpretation; b. a foreteller and a forthteller to rebuke, to instruct, to correct, to edify, exhort, comport, even when there was no predictive element to the sermon, (1 Cor14:3-4, 22, 26, 29-31); c. who had power of insight and foresight, understanding the plan of God for the ages, nations, peoples, sin and how God deals with it.
9. Learn the history, time, customs, circumstances of the writer, the form s/he uses in writing - (expressions, idioms), purpose for writing and the state and condition of the people spoken to in relation to God.

B. LAW OF COMPOUND PROBABILITY (chances of a prediction occurring)

Each detail given in a prophecy doubles the chances of it not occurring unless it is of God. The formula is 2^n where n = the number of details predicted used as the exponent. In any given prophetic prediction

- 1 detail has a $\frac{1}{2}$ chance of occurring
- 2 details have a $\frac{1}{4}$ chance of occurring
- 3 details have a 2^{-3} power chance or $\frac{1}{8}$
- 4 details is 2^{-4} power or $\frac{1}{16}$
- 10 details is 2^{-10} power or $\frac{1}{1024}$
- 20 details is 2^{-20} power or $\frac{1}{1,048,576}$

STEPS TO DETERMINE THE PROBABILITY OF A PREDICTION

Step 1. Determine the number of specific details given in the statement of prophecy.

Step 2. Use this number as an exponent of 2.

Step 3. Calculate the probability.

C. TRUE AND FALSE PROPHECY

Predictions must come to pass accurate in every detail to be true. All true prophecies will come to pass. Not all prophecies that come to pass are of God (Deut.13:1-6;18:22). Prophecies will be judged by the word of God.

Example Numbers11:18 7specific facts 1 in 128 chances of occurring as given 127/128 chances of not. When, what, who gives, only supernatural, duration, result, reason.

D. ERAS OF PROPHECY

42 Prophecies were given to Israel in 475 years from Genesis through Joshua (Abraham 7, Isaac 1, Jacob 3, Moses in Exodus 13, Lev 1, Num 1, Deut 13, Joshua 3). Many prophecies and many predictions within each prophecy have been given, only a portion have been fulfilled. In this study of prophets:

Isaiah gives 75 prophecies with 1313 predictions, 864 yet to be fulfilled.
Jeremiah gives 90 prophecies with 1002 predictions, 223 unfulfilled.
Ezekiel gives 65 prophecies with 953 predictions, 294 unfulfilled.
Daniel gives 17 prophecies in 139 verses, 60 verses unfilled.

Example: Isaiah's Predictions

<u>Prophecy</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Fulfilled</u>	<u>Unfulfilled</u>
1	1:5-9	6	-
2	1:24-31	-	16
3	2:2-4	-	10
4	2:6-21	3	12
5	3:-4:6	10	15
6	5:1-30	24	-
7	6:9-13	10	-
8	7:3-9	3	-
9	7:10-25	12	-
10	8:1-4	2	-
11	8:5-9:7	14	6
12	9:8-10:4	18	-